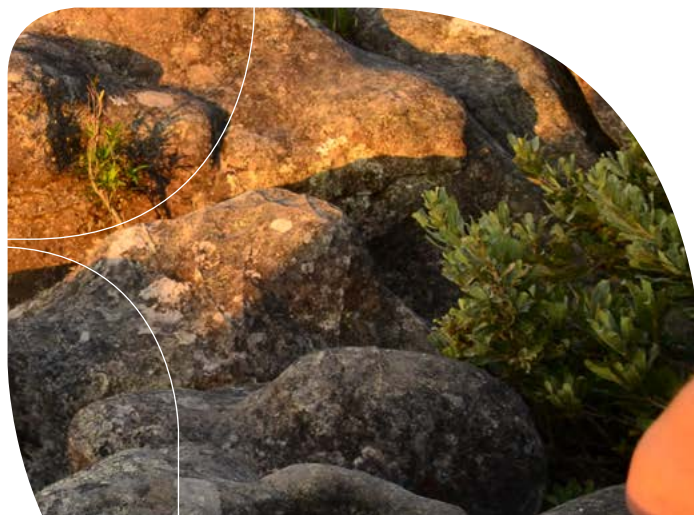




Local Land
Services
South East

2016 Local Annual Report



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Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of the report January 2016 to December 2016. However, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Local Land Services or the user's independent adviser.
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Foreword

It is my pleasure to present the South East Local Land Services Annual Report for 2016.

The 2016 Annual Report highlights the range of on-ground work and activities undertaken by South East Local Land Services across our core business functions: biosecurity, emergency management, productive agriculture and natural resource management.

The work done by Local Land Services staff, customers, local communities and various other partners, has helped protect productive agriculture and added value to regional landscapes and economies throughout the year.

Some highlights from 2016 include:

- The introduction of six teams across the region; South Coast, Goulburn/Highlands, Yass, Palerang, Far South Coast and Monaro. Each team headed by a local manager who oversees staff with a mix of skills and experience that enables us to meet the needs and expectations of our customers and also the requirements of the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.
- The development of local service delivery plans for each local area. This has enabled us to better meet the needs of our customers and local communities by providing our core services in a more targeted and effective manner while also aiding our ability to respond to emergencies.
- The development of signature programs including; Feral Fighters, the Small Farms Network, a 'mountains to sea' water management program and a long term productive agriculture program, which have enabled us to focus on specific threats and opportunities across the region, build capacity among customers and communities to encourage self-reliance and sustainability.
- The integrated service delivery model has allowed us to provide whole of landscape solutions to what used to be looked at as 'discipline specific problems'. The Gunning District Landcare case study on page 10 is a good example of this. We have delivered a biodiversity outcome by using biosecurity tools.



In 2017 we will seek to build on the work done in previous years by focusing on:

- customers and customer satisfaction
- local delivery and integration of services
- a whole of farm and whole of landscape approach to business
- developing, strengthening and maintaining robust and sound partnerships with stakeholders.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedicated work of the South East Local Land Services management team and staff for their efforts throughout 2016.

I would also like to thank the many local communities and partners that work hand in hand with our staff to deliver on our common goals.

We hope customers and members of our local communities continue to work with us to improve primary production and assist rural and regional communities to be profitable and sustainable into the future.

Derek Larsen
General Manager, South East Local Land Services

South East region at a glance



The South East Local Land Services region covers 55,600 square kilometres of south-east NSW – from north of Wollongong to the Victorian border in the South.

It extends westward – from north of Boorowa to Thredbo in the south. The area covers 673 kilometres of coastline or 40 per cent of the NSW coast. The region includes the local government areas of Bega Valley, the Boorowa part of Hilltops, Snowy-Monaro, Eurobodalla, Goulburn-Mulwaree, Kiama, Queanbeyan- Palerang, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven, Upper Lachlan, Wingecarribee, Wollongong and Yass Valley.

The region is home to approximately 605,000 people including over 16,500 Indigenous Australians.

The current economic prosperity of the South East Local Land Services region is dependent upon natural resources which support a variety of highly diverse land uses including agriculture (sheep, beef, dairy and cropping and horticulture), aquaculture water harvesting, commercial and recreational fishing, heavy industry, forestry, surface and underground mining, urban and lifestyle development and tourism and recreation. The value of the region's agriculture is approximately \$644 million per annum.

The region is dominated by large tracts of public land, including national parks, state forests and Crown lands. Nature-based tourism is a significant contributor to the region's economy, especially in the snowy mountains and on the coast.

2016 local achievements

6,793

HECTARES OF TRAVELLING
STOCK RESERVES MANAGED



1,170

GENERAL CONSULTATIONS BY
VETS AND BIOSECURITY OFFICERS



174

SALEYARD INSPECTIONS

74

LIVESTOCK EXPORT
CERTIFICATES ISSUED



1,674

PARTICIPANTS AT
TRAINING EVENTS



6,134

HECTARES MANAGED FOR NATURAL
RESOURCES OUTCOMES



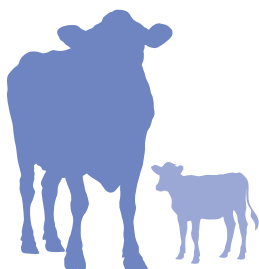
\$3.6 M

INVESTED IN COMMUNITY GROUPS AND
ON-FARM ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION



1,757

PROPERTIES INVOLVED
IN WILD DOG BAITING



680

PERMITS ISSUED
FOR MOVING STOCK

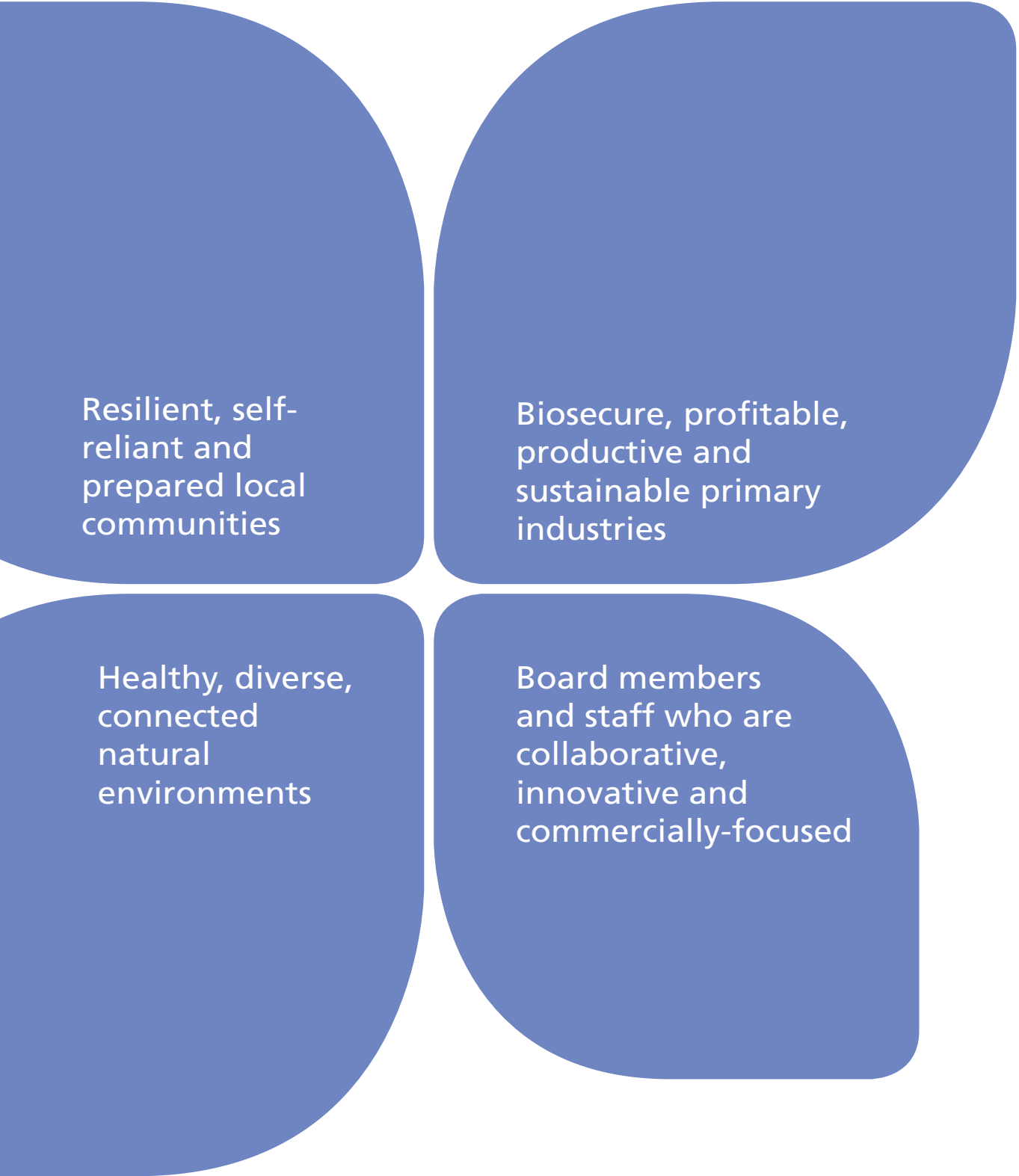


6,466

HECTARES MANAGED FOR
PEST ANIMAL CONTROL

Local Land Services goals

Local Land Services aligns all of its work with its mission of being a customer-focused business that enables improved primary production and better management of natural resources. The strategic direction of Local Land Services is summarised in four organisational goals.



Resilient, self-reliant and prepared local communities

Biosecure, profitable, productive and sustainable primary industries

Healthy, diverse, connected natural environments

Board members and staff who are collaborative, innovative and commercially-focused



Local Land Services statewide goals

The operations of South East Local Land Services are aligned and integrated with the four statewide goals of Local Land Services. The South East Strategic Plan describes each area of operation and outlines key strategies and activities that will achieve each statewide goal.

Resilient, self-reliant and prepared local communities

South East Local Land Services is committed to making a significant contribution to the South East region in order to see it thrive. Resilience, self-reliance and preparedness are vital ingredients in a thriving community, ensuring it is better able to withstand shocks or disturbances to the landscape, production of food and fibre and the economy, and still maintain its functions and structures.

The following activities have been implemented by South East Local Land Services in 2016 which was the second year of operation under the South East Local Strategic Plan.

Emergency management and disaster relief

Emergency management is a shared responsibility that involves prevention and preparedness to minimise the impact of emergencies, responding to emergency events and conducting recovery operations to return communities, the environment and economy to business as usual.

In partnership with the NSW Department of Primary Industries, we help manage livestock disease and emergencies such as drought, bushfires and floods and biosecurity events involving plants, animals and pest insects.

Forty five per cent of South East Local Land Services staff have received base-level biosecurity and emergency response training while 35 per cent of staff have been trained beyond this level.

Trained staff have assisted in five emergency responses during the year.

Training courses undertaken include:

- introduction to emergency management
- crew resource management
- emergency operations centre concepts.

Aboriginal communities

We support Aboriginal people to care for Country, share traditional land management knowledge and help protect and strengthen Aboriginal cultural heritage.

We're working to promote Aboriginal cultural awareness and enhance engagement throughout our region.

Our goal is to support Aboriginal communities in caring for Country, particularly through employment and training opportunities to build skills and capacity in land management.

We held 37 events to raise awareness of Aboriginal culture and heritage. 120 attendees at these events identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

Sustainable agriculture

South East Local Land Services provides high quality advisory services to landholders in the region to improve the sustainability and resilience of the landscape, agriculture industries and communities.

We have a strong team that provides credible, unbiased and trusted advice built upon sound scientific knowledge and evidence based practices.

We increased the capacity of land managers to improve primary production and natural resource management and trained more than 970 customers at training events.

More than 4,131 hectares of land was managed for sustainable grazing in the region.

Projects in the past year have included soil and climate data interpretation workshops.

We increased the capacity of land managers to improve primary production and natural resource management and trained more than 970 customers at training events.

More than 4,131 hectares of land was managed for sustainable grazing in the region.



Biosecure, profitable, productive and sustainable primary industries

Effective biosecurity and animal welfare is insurance to maintain market access for South East livestock and crop producers, now and in the future. South East produce is free of many of the pests and diseases found in other parts of the world and that's why Local Land Services works diligently with ratepayers to monitor herds, flocks, and crops across the region and shares up-to-date advice and information to boost productivity.

Animal biosecurity and welfare

Pest animals cause serious economic losses to agricultural production, pose a risk of exotic disease, threaten the survival of many native species and cause environmental degradation. We work with landholders to minimise the impact of pests on agricultural production and the environment. In the past year district veterinarians and biosecurity officers attended 1,170 general consultations along with conducting 397 disease investigations.

Projects in the past year have included facial eczema response in Bega and the Baseline Beef Monitoring project in Braidwood.

Invasive species and plant biosecurity

Invasive pests can impact significantly on the productivity and profitability of agriculture. We work with landholders to minimise the impact of pests on agricultural production and the environment. We provided 60 education and training workshops to build the capacity of 704 land managers and support and help coordinate group control programs — bringing landholders together to control wild dogs, foxes, pigs, deer, plague locusts and other pests.

Working with land managers 13 wild dog management plans have been implemented and, 1,757 properties were involved in 1080 dog baiting over an area of 843,760 hectares across the region.

Projects in the past year have included the Feral Fighters community group control baiting programs and the continued implementation of wild dog management plans.

Another high priority is supporting land managers and producers to manage existing weeds such as pasture weeds and environmental woody weeds, and prevent the spread of new and emerging weeds which can impact negatively on agriculture. We're committed to improving the coordination of weed management in the region.

Protecting our agricultural industry

To support primary producers we encourage and promote sustainable agricultural practices and increase the productivity of primary production. Our biosecurity officers are empowered as stock inspectors in NSW.

Good surveillance detects any problems early and ensures the quality and safety of NSW livestock and livestock products, and access to domestic and international markets. In the past year we undertook six investigations to exclude an emergency animal disease.

Our district veterinarians and biosecurity staff have also been working with land managers in the Cooma-Monaro region to assess and control issues with footrot as they have emerged.

Travelling stock reserves and stock management

South East Local Land Services manages travelling stock reserves for multiple users in the common interest of the whole community.

We manage more than 6,793 hectares of travelling stock reserves and promote a balance of use for production, social, cultural and environmental outcomes and continuously work to maintain and improve the resource.

Mobs of travelling stock are common throughout the South East with 680 walking permits issued in 2016 for stock movements.

To control the movement of stock, South East Local Land Services monitors the National Livestock Identification Scheme for compliance by undertaking saleyard audits and inspections and completed 174 inspections during the year.

Some 74 livestock export certificates were issued from the South East during 2016 ensuring our stock are free from livestock health and disease problems.

To protect market access, South East Local Land Services manages the Property Identification Scheme (PIC), with 114 issued during the year.



Healthy, diverse, connected natural environments

South East Local Land Services' team works hard to bring landholders and our customers the best available research, knowledge and skills to assist producers to be more profitable and to ensure that natural resources are available for future generations.

We support healthy environments and biodiverse ecosystems across the South East region by assisting landholders and communities to improve the quality of their land, soil, vegetation and water through grants and funding for on-ground projects, partnerships and training.

Land management

Healthy ecosystems underpin successful, productive primary producers and communities. Through investment from the NSW and Australian governments, we support a healthy ecosystem across the landscapes of NSW.

We're focussed on implementing landscape-scale approaches to address threats to the natural environment. In particular, we are supporting land managers to rehabilitate degraded habitat, manage weeds and pests, and contribute to the recovery of threatened ecological communities.

In the past year 166 voluntary conservation agreements were negotiated, protecting and conserving for biodiversity enhancement 5,889 hectares of land, and 4,131 hectares received support for measures to better manage sustainable grazing.

Projects in the past year have included the Rural Landscape Program.

Biodiversity

Native vegetation benefits both on farm production and environmental health. Healthy native vegetation can increase land values and productivity while reducing operating costs.

We're aiming to improve the condition of native vegetation and riparian areas, extend habitat for threatened flora and fauna, and enhance existing wetland vegetation extent and quality.

To achieve this, we have enhanced and rehabilitated 160 hectares of wetland and 119 hectares of coastal native vegetation.

Sound management of native vegetation to rehabilitate, enhance and protect remnants and to increase the area of native vegetation in the landscape is a key objective for land managers in the South East region.

In the past year we have enhanced and rehabilitated 1,286 hectares of land and protected 1,538 hectares of vegetation through fencing.

With better knowledge and improved land management techniques, soil is protected by native vegetation to reduce its susceptibility to erosion.

Native vegetation is also critical for maintaining and improving habitat for many threatened flora and fauna species and for sustaining the health and function of local ecosystems, we planted 412 hectares of native species to assist in regeneration.

Investment and partnerships

We support and engage new and existing Landcare networks and groups, community and industry partners, to undertake on-ground works and capacity building activities.

Working with Landcare NSW and NSW Government, we're aiming to improve land and water ecosystem management, soil health, and native vegetation protection.

South East Local Land Services has allocated more than 3.6 million dollars for the operation of local Landcare networks and the delivery of regional Landcare facilitator functions for the three-year period from 2015 to 2018.

Collaborative projects in the past year have included the South East Local Leaders program and resilience building in the Upper Lachlan Catchment area.





Our community

Yass Senior Biosecurity Officer Chris Harris has been a driving force behind the successful Feral Fighters program that has been piloted by the Gunning District Landcare Group.

Chris has been working in biosecurity for ten years. Previously with the Yass Rural Lands Protection Board and the Tablelands Livestock Health and Pest Authority, Chris has been with the Local Land Services in Yass since 2013.

Chris is passionate about biosecurity and the contribution he can make to the community through his role.

Chris takes great pride in his work and helping land managers with their biosecurity problems so they can focus on running their businesses and enjoying the pleasures that a rural lifestyle affords.

A Feral Fighters success story

The Gunning District Landcare Regional Fox Control Program working group has set an ambitious aim of reducing fox populations by 90 per cent, with a target of laying 10,000 fox baits annually.

Location

Gunning.

The challenge

The Gunning District Landcare Regional Fox Control Program (GDL) was formed in 2015, to coordinate fox control in the Gunning district.

Previous control efforts were ad-hoc and uncoordinated with the various groups baiting at different times throughout the year.

The program was devised with the aim of developing a community led initiative which would deliver a strategic, coordinated group response to the problem of foxes.

The program brought together 16 local groups with each group led by a local organiser, who coordinated participants and collated bait requirements for their local area.

This provided an efficient and effective system, enabled clear lines of communication and increased ownership of the program by group organisers and provides a good example of a biodiversity outcome being achieved using biosecurity tools.

The GDL working group has set an ambitious aim of reducing fox populations by 90 per cent, with a target of laying 10,000 fox baits annually.

Work undertaken

- GDL programs were run in 2016.
- five vertebrate pesticide training courses run
- participant survey developed.

Benefits

- increased coordination of fox control programs
- effective communication with land managers
- more effective use of Local Land Services staff time
- increased lambing percentages
- anecdotal evidence of increased biodiversity.



Key achievements

- 309 participants
- 9,000 1080 baits laid
- 225,000 hectares of land baited
- 89 per cent of participants considered the program successful.

Total investment

- \$8,500

In collaboration with

- Gunning District Landcare.

Making better decisions using data

South East Local Land Services has been working with the Monaro Farming Systems group to support climate modelling and help land managers plan for the future.

Location

South East region.

The challenge

Land managers across NSW want access to accurate climate data so they can make informed planning decisions.

The information coming out of climate models is the best it has ever been, but it can be difficult to interpret and use in decision making without the right knowledge. South East Local Land Services has been working with the Monaro Farming Systems group (MFS) to support this and help land managers plan for the future.

Work undertaken

South East Local Land Services contributes to the running and co-ordination of the MFS but the real value comes by partnering on specific projects like the MFS Seasonal Outlook.

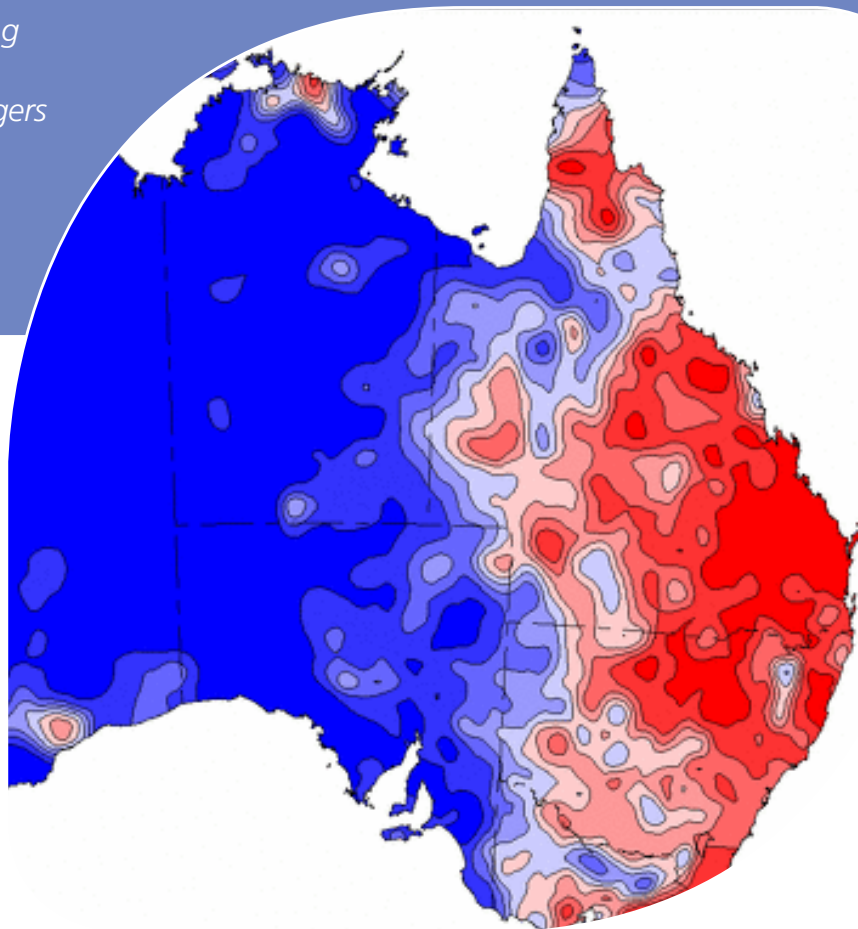
Working with the Bureau of Meteorology three month seasonal outlook, MFS is able to plot scenarios for grazing systems in spring, summer and autumn.

Each outlook plots soil moisture, native and introduced pasture growth and livestock conditions against long term averages, possible scenarios for pasture growth, ground cover and livestock conditions depending on forecast conditions; and finally possible management strategies.

The possible strategies will depend on the forecast, but may include details concerning feeding strategies, stocking rate changes or opportunities for crop or hay production. Importantly these strategies equip landholders with up to date information that assists them in making better on farm decisions.

Benefits

- allows land managers to be proactive instead of reactive
- allows land managers to make more informed decisions regarding stock pressures on landscapes
- improves land managers understanding of the climate and its relationship to their land
- gives land managers confidence to make the most of opportunities while minimizing risk
- assists producers to capitalise on market opportunities and short term trading strategies.



Key achievements

- 40 of the 63 MFS properties participated in the program
- approximately 50 individuals received training in the interpretation and application of climate data
- attendees who participated manage approximately 60,000 ha (48 per cent of total land managed by MFS members)
- 65 per cent of MFS managers have implemented practice change as a result of this and other MFS projects.

Total investment

- \$5,000 per annum.

In collaboration with

- Monaro Farming Systems
- GrazProphet Consulting.

Soil interpretation workshop

To address a soil health knowledge gap South East Local Land Services hosted soil interpretation workshops to demonstrate to landholders how properly recorded data could be used to help them make better land management decisions.

Location

South East region.

The challenge

Soil health is essential for sustainable rural enterprises of all sizes, but it is a complex and technical area that is often hard to grasp.

To address this knowledge gap we hosted soil interpretation workshops to demonstrate to landholders how properly recorded data could be used to help them make better land management decisions.

Work undertaken

Participants were trained in soil collection techniques in the two weeks prior to the workshop dates.

Two workshops were then run, one week apart.

Workshop one was an on ground session with sampling demonstrations and discussions about the local geology and how it helps shape soil content.

Day two was an information session where participants were shown how to interpret results and use them to make better informed management decisions.

Benefits

- the workshops 'demystified' soil test interpretation
- the workshops built capacity and encouraged self-reliance among the community
- increased involvement and data recording will aid future planning
- new skills help landholders make informed decisions about how to manage their land.



Key achievements

- 25 local participants
- 130 soil samples taken and analysed
- 30 soil test interpretation reports generated
- 90 per cent of participants said their knowledge had improved as a result of the workshops.

Total investment

- \$9,600.

In collaboration with

- Small Farms Network
- South Coast Beef Producers Network
- NSW Department of Primary Industries.

Rural landscape program

South East Local Land Services and Water NSW have been working together to provide funding and advice to local landholders wishing to undertake erosion control measures, improve grazing conditions and repair riparian areas.

Location

Sydney drinking water catchments in the South East region.

The challenge

The Sydney drinking water catchment extends well beyond the boundaries of metropolitan Sydney into largely rural landscapes.

These landscapes are susceptible to issues like erosion which can have a detrimental effect on the quality of drinking water.

We needed to find a way to entice landholders to make specific improvements related to downstream water quality a priority.

Work undertaken

South East Local Land Services and Water NSW have been working together to provide funding and advice to local landholders wishing to undertake erosion control measures, improve grazing conditions and repair riparian areas.

The program focused on initiatives and actions that engage landholders to improve land management practices and reduce risks to water quality in Sydney drinking water catchments.

Benefits

- local land managers get the opportunity to address issues with the assistance of technical advice and funding support on their properties that they may well not otherwise be able to address
- local land managers gain new skills and understanding around the flow on effects of their management decisions
- landholders are able to plan and address issues at a property scale that are beneficial to their land and associated production systems as well as downstream water supplies
- improvement in the quality of Sydney drinking water.



Key achievements

- 28 projects delivered
- 437 hectares of grazing area influenced
- 40.7 km of riparian bank length fenced and protected from stock
- 5,099 hectares of total land area protected from erosion by engineering works.

Total investment

- \$2.8 million.

In collaboration with

- Water NSW
- National Landcare Programme
- Catchment Action NSW
- local land managers.

Office locations

Bega:

Rooftop Level, Sapphire Marketplace
2/83 Upper Street
PO Box 118
Bega NSW 2550
Ph: 02 6491 7800
Fax: 02 6492 3019
Office hours: 8.30 am - 4.30 pm

Berry

13 Scholfields Lane
PO Box 63
Berry NSW 2535
Ph: 02 4464 6000
Fax: 02 4464 2113
Office hours: 8.30 am - 4.30 pm

Braidwood

42 Ryrie Street
PO Box 97
Braidwood NSW 2622
Ph: 02 4842 2594
Fax: 02 4842 2655
Office hours: 9 am - 5 pm

Cooma

26 Soho Street
PO Box 26
Cooma NSW 2630
Ph: 02 6452 1455
Fax: 02 6452 2080
Office hours: 8.30 am - 4.30 pm

Goulburn

159 Auburn Street
PO Box 67
Goulburn NSW 2580
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Fax: 02 4828 6750
Office hours: 8.30 am - 4.30 pm

Yass

13 Mitchell Street
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